

Message Text

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65

ACTION SCCT-01

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

SY-05 OPR-02 USSS-00 SCS-03 SCA-01 EB-07 COME-00

NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 /066 W

----- 061225

O 282029Z FEB 76 ZFF-4

FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2181

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE CARACAS 2345

FOR A/CCT

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ASEC VE

SUBJECT: NIEHOUS KIDNAPPING; PRESS

1. THE THREE MAJOR MORNING NEWSPAPERS, EL NACIONAL, EL UNIVERSAL AND ULTIMAS NOTICIAS HEADLINE STORIES ON THEIR FRONT PAGE, WITH PHOTOS TAKEN AT NIEHOUS HOME OF NIEHOUS FAMILY. HEADLINE READS "NORTH AMERICAN EXECUTIVE KIDNAPPED BY 7 ARMED MEN" SUBHEADED BY "VICE PRESIDENT AND GENERAL MANAGER OF OWENS-ILLINOIS OF VENEZUELA WAS ABDUCTED FROM HIS HOME AT 8 O'CLOCK LAST NIGHT." ALL SECURITY FORCES HAVE BEEN MOBILIZED ACCORDING TO THE MINISTER OF INTERIOR. FULL STORY WITH PHOTOS OF NIEHOUS, HIS HOME AND MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY SPREAD OVER BACK PAGE OF LAST SECTION. OTHER TWO NEWSPAPERS CARRY ESSENTIALLY THE SAME HEADLINES. THE NEWSPAPERS REPORT THAT SEVEN (7) ARMED MEN, TWO DRESSED IN MILITARY CAMOUFLAGE FATIGUES AND FIVE IN CIVILIAN CLOTHES, MADE A FORCED ENTRY AT 8:15 LAST NIGHT. THEY REPORTEDLY INJECTED A SOPORIFIC. THE NEWSPAPERS CARRIED NO INFORMATION OTHER THAN THAT ALREADY REPORTED TO THE DEPARTMENT.

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2. EMBASSY WAS INFORMED BY CLEM COHEN OF OCI THAT HE HAD

BEEN AUTHORIZED BY MINISTER OF INFORMATION TO REPLY TO PRESS QUERIES ALONG THE FOLLOWING LINES AND HAD, IN FACT, USED THIS FORMULATION WITH BOTH UPI AND API: "IN THE PAST WHEN TERRORISTS TRIED TO PICK ON NATIONALS THEY WERE REJECTED BY THE PEOPLE. THIS WILL BE THE CASE ONCE AGAIN. THEY ARE NOT ROBIN HOODS. THEY ARE COMMON CRIMINALS." COHEN SAID HE WAS ALSO AUTHORIZED TO STATE THAT THE KIDNAPPING WAS 'APPARENTLY POLITICAL' ALTHOUGH HE COULD NOT SAY SO DEFINITELY.

3. ON THE ADVICE OF MR. HURWITZ OF S/CCT WE CALLED COHEN TO EXPRESS OUR CONCERN THAT THIS TYPE OF STATEMENT MIGHT BE ACCEPTED BY THE KIDNAPPERS AS UNDULY PROVOCATIVE AND SUGGESTED THAT WE COORDINATE ON FUTURE PRESS POSITIONS.

4. MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR OCTAVIO LEPAGE GAVE A PRESS CONFERENCE AT APPROXIMATELY NOON AND, ACCORDING TO REPORTS WHICH ARE STILL COMING INTO EMBASSY, SAID THAT THE KIDNAPPERS BELONG TO A LEFTIST GROUP (WHICH STILL UNNAMED) THAT WAS SEARCHING FOR MONEY. HE SAID THAT ALL ROADS OUT OF VALLEY OF CARACAS WERE SUBJECT TO ROAD BLOCKS AND THAT AIRPORTS AND PORTS WERE BEING RIGOROUSLY CHECKED. HE ADDED THAT SECURITY FORCES WERE CHECKING THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY IN AN INTENSIVE SEARCH FOR NIEHOUS AND THAT SO FAR THERE HAD BEEN NO CONTACT FROM THE KIDNAPPERS. HE SAID THAT THE MINISTRY WOULD CONTINUE TO DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO SOLVE THE CASE.
SHLAUDEMAM

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Message Attributes

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Concepts: KIDNAPPING, BUSINESSMEN, TERRORISTS
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Draft Date: 28 FEB 1976
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Margaret P. Grafeld
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TAGS: ASEC, CASC, PINS, VE, US, BANDERA ROJA, (NIEHOUS, WILLIAM F)
To: STATE
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